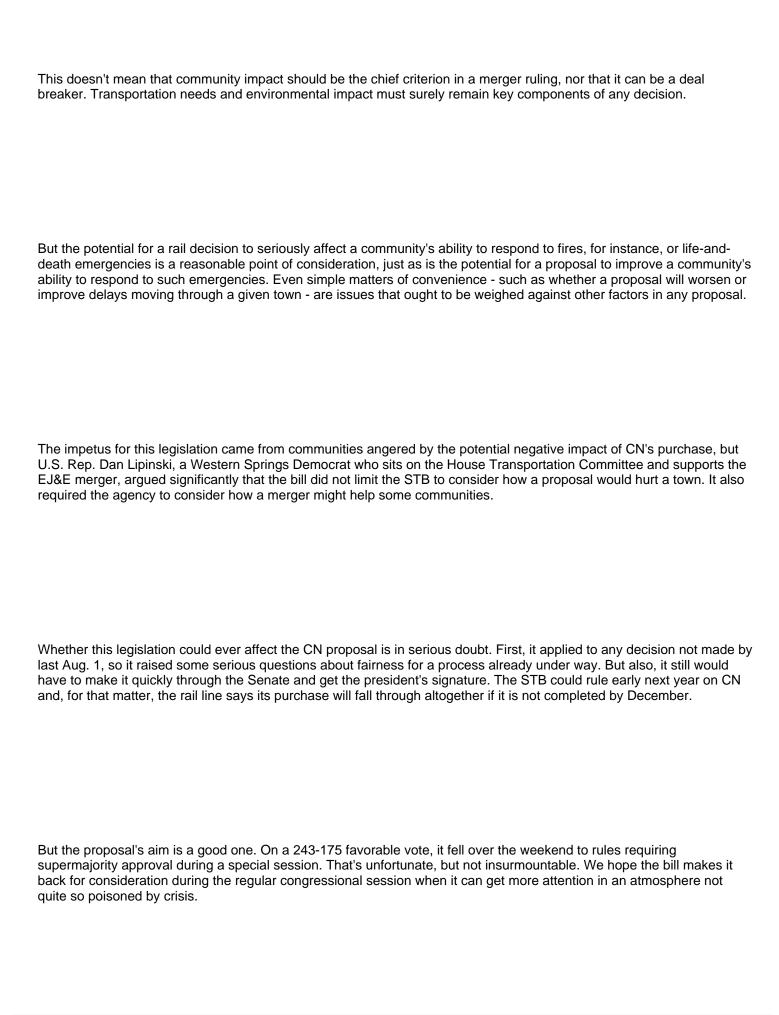
(October 1, 2008) Daily Herald Editorial Board: Consider rail merger's community effect
http://www.dailyherald.com/story/?id=239426&src=
Considering the current economic crisis, it may not be surprising that federal lawmakers failed over the weekend to pass legislation that could materially affect how proposals like Canadian National Railway's purchase of the EJ&E rail line are approved.
But that doesn't mean the legislation should be allowed to wither.
The bill in question aims to require the federal Surface Transportation Board, the agency charged with approving transactions such as the CN purchase, to include potential community impact when making its ruling.
Currently, the STB focuses primarily on whether a proposal meets transportation needs and what its effect will be on the environment. Supporters of the law argue that this leaves out of the equation people who may be most directly affected by the movement of trains through their communities. Those people, they argue, ought at least be considered in the approval process.
And they are right.

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Whether you favor or oppose the CN merger, or other similar proposals that may follow here or elsewhere in the country, it can surely only improve the process to include examination of the harm and benefit a rail proposal will cause to the towns it directly touches.

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